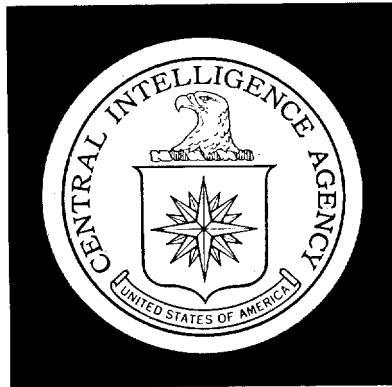


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HONDURAS: Squabbling over judicial positions is threatening to end the two-month experiment in national unity government and could prompt a military take-over.

Under the terms of the "national unity pact," governmental positions were to be divided equally between members of the National and Liberal parties. Legislative and cabinet posts were filled with little difficulty, but on Wednesday the bipartisan talks broke down after long disputes over judicial positions below the Supreme Court level, and a legislative session considering the problem was suspended.

Unless the aged [redacted] President Cruz and leaders of both parties are able to assert some authority on behalf of national unity and get on with the formation of a functioning government, the likelihood of a military coup is considerable. The leader of such a take-over would be the former president, General Oswaldo Lopez, who has been outspokenly distrustful of civilian politicians for many years. Despite his authorship of the national unity pact, he would not hesitate to step in "for the good of the country" if he became convinced that his distrust was justified.

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